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NAEP 2005 Reading, Math Scores Released ***Iowa makes modest progress on achievement gaps***

(DES MOINES, IA) – October 18, 2005 – Iowa's 4th- and 8th-graders have above average reading and math skills compared with their peers across the nation, according to results from Spring 2005 reading and math tests administered by the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP). While overall statewide results are mostly unchanged from the prior NAEP assessments in 2003, achievement gaps have lessened for some groups of students and remain lower than the national average.

NAEP administered the assessment to a sample of public school students at grades 4 and 8 throughout the nation, and provided state-level results for both grades. In Iowa, 263 schools in 161 districts participated in 2005. Participation in the assessments is required as part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

"Although NAEP uses a completely different assessment methodology and reports the results differently when compared to our state assessment, the results complement the student achievement information gained from state and local assessments, such as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills," said Judy Jeffrey, director of the Iowa Department of Education. "Iowa educators and students should be proud of their achievement. As they work to continue to improve overall scores and close achievement gaps, local districts are encouraged to incorporate this data when they evaluate their curriculum."

For instance, Jeffrey noted that nearly a third of the 8th grade math questions were based on algebra. "Incorporating algebra skills into 8th grade curriculum will not only help boost assessment scores, but, more important, will better prepare students for rigorous high school courses," she said.

In addition to curriculum upgrades, Jeffrey said funding for preschool and professional development for teachers and administrators are the best investments to make to improve academic achievement and eliminate achievement gaps.

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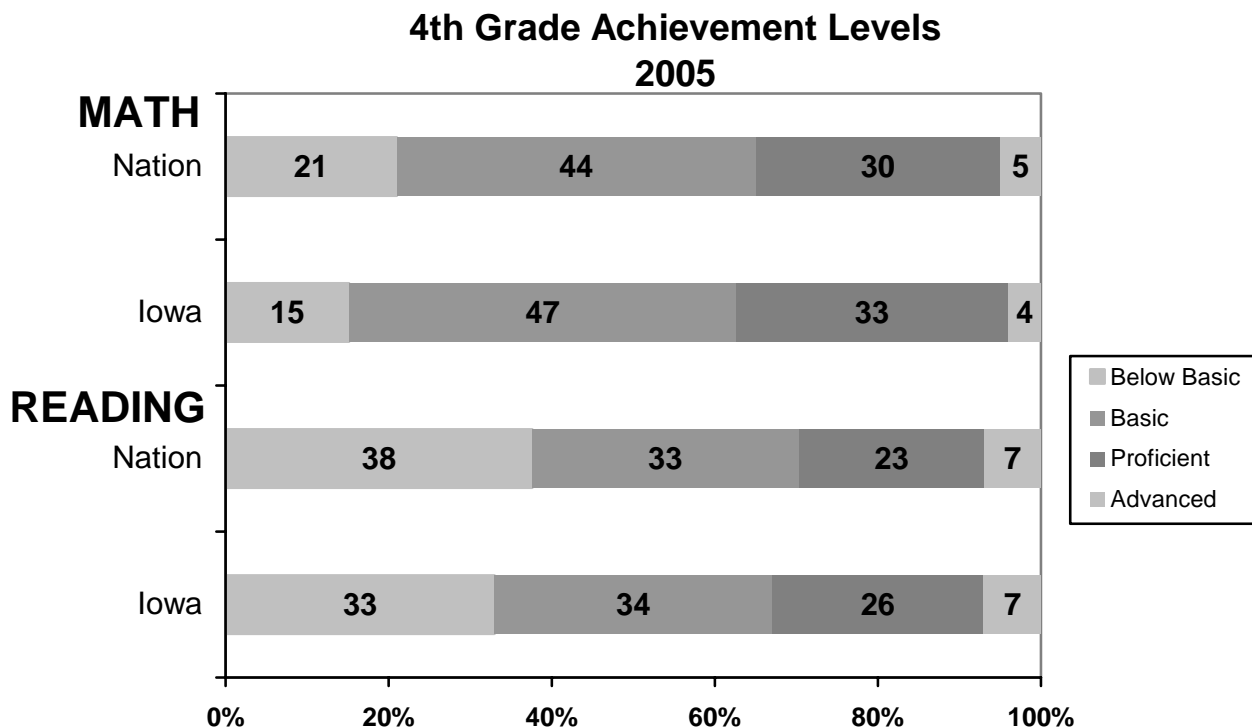
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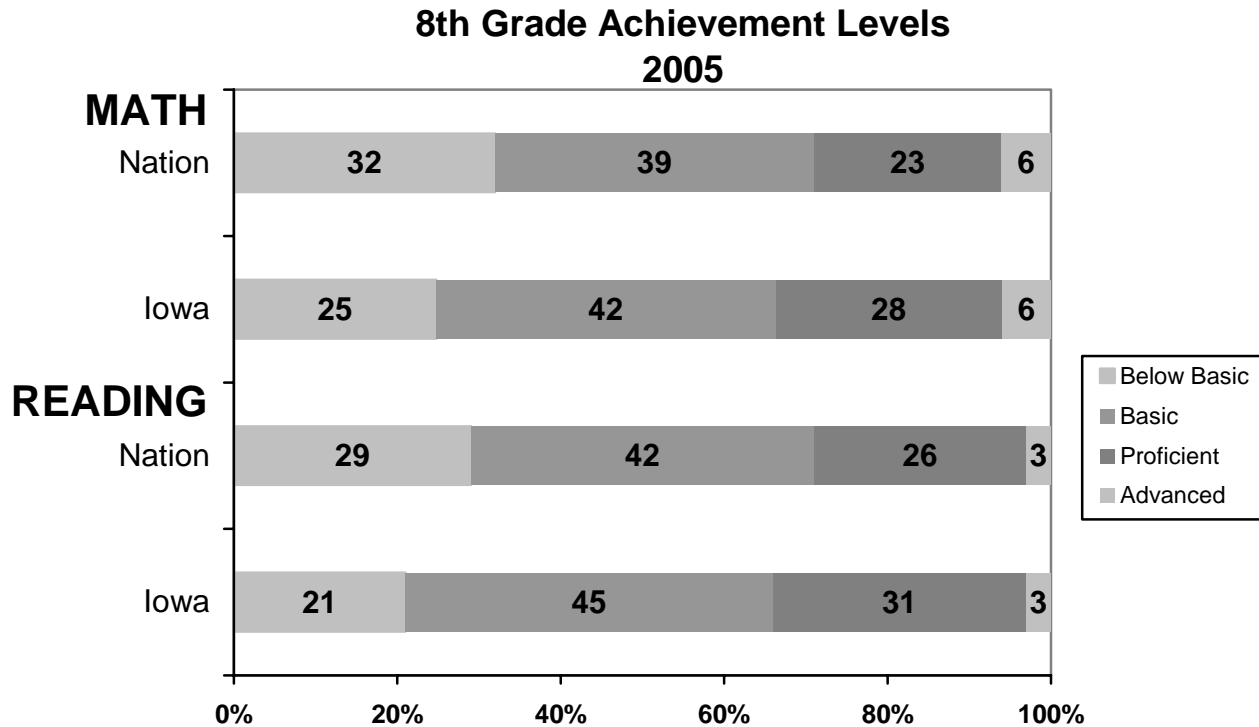
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OVERALL RESULTS

- **READING, GRADE 4.** The average scale score for students in Iowa was 221, higher than the national average score of 217 and a slight decline from the 2003 average of 223. The percentage of Iowa students who performed at or above the basic level was 67%, compared to 62% nationally. Last year, 70% scored at or above the basic level..
- **READING, GRADE 8.** The average scale score for students in Iowa was 267, higher than the national average score of 260, and a slight decline from the 2003 average of 268. The percentage of Iowa students who performed at or above the basic level remained at 79%, compared to 71% nationally.
- **MATH, GRADE 4.** The average scale score for 4th-grade students in Iowa was 240, higher than the national average score of 237, and a slight increase from the 2003 average of 238. The percentage of Iowa students who performed at or above the basic level was 85%, compared to 79% nationally and a slight increase from the 83% who performed at or above the basic level in 2003.
- **MATH, GRADE 8.** The average scale score for 8th-grade students in Iowa remained at 284, higher than the national average score of 278. The percentage of Iowa students who performed at or above the basic level was 75%, compared to 68% nationally, and a slight decrease from the 76% who performed at or above the basic level in 2003.





ACHIEVEMENT GAP PROGRESS

GAPS in average scale scores, 4th Grade Math

Year	BLACK ¹		HISPANIC ^{1*}		LOW INCOME ²	
	IOWA	Nation	IOWA	Nation	IOWA	Nation
1996	25♦	33	NA	20	15♦	25
2000	17■♦	30	NA	20	14■♦	26
2003	26♦	27	13♦	15	17♦	23
2005	18■♦	26	12■♦	14	14■♦	22

GAPS in average scale scores, 8th Grade Math

Year	BLACK ¹		HISPANIC ^{1*}		LOW INCOME ²	
	IOWA	Nation	IOWA	Nation	IOWA	Nation
1996	29♦	40	NA	24	15♦	27
2000	NA	40	NA	26	14■♦	30
2003	30♦	35	22♦	22	24♦	28
2005	30♦	34	17■♦	19	20■♦	27

GAPS in average scale scores, 4th Grade Reading

Year	BLACK ¹		HISPANIC ^{1*}		LOW INCOME ²	
	IOWA	Nation	IOWA	Nation	IOWA	Nation
1992	18◆	32	NA		NA	
1994	39	38	NA		NA	
1998	31■◆	32	NA	24	21◆	30
2002	18■◆	29	NA	17	15■◆	27
2003	30	30	11◆	18	22◆	28
2005	23■◆	29	13◆	17	19■◆	27

GAPS in average scale scores, 8th Grade Reading

Year	BLACK ¹		HISPANIC ^{1*}		LOW INCOME ²	
	IOWA	Nation	IOWA	Nation	IOWA	Nation
1992	NA	29	NA		NA	
1994	NA	30	NA		NA	
1998	NA	26	NA	22	NA	23
2002	NA	27	NA	19	NA	22
2003	25◆	27	16◆	19	21◆	25
2005	23■◆	27	8■◆	17	17■◆	23

- = Improvement over prior assessment.
- ◆ = Better than national average.
- 1 = Compared to white students.
- 2 = Compared to non-low income students.
- * = Hispanic students exclude the Hispanic students who are English Language Learners (ELL).
- NA = Iowa students participated in these years, but the student sample was too small to generate reliable results.

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